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Plot to Kill Chavez
Brainchild of Israeli Lobby

By Michael Collins Piper

Hugo Chavez, the colorful Venezuelan nationalist strongman, is now officially a target of the powerful neo-conservative, pro-Israel network that directs policy inside the Bush administration.

Although the major media portrayed television evangelist Pat Robertson's recent call for the United States to assassinate Chavez as some sort of reckless outburst — which the administration formally, if not convincingly, denounced and for which Robertson offered his own less-than-sincere "apology" — the record shows that the pro- Israel "neo-cons" have had Chavez in their gunsights for some time now.

For the last five years, the neo-conservative "high priests of war" — along with their allies in pro-Israel journals and newspapers in the United States and worldwide — have been muttering ominously that Chavez and his government are "anti-Semitic" and hostile to the interests of Israel.

Probably not coincidentally, Robertson's call for Chavez's murder came on Aug. 22 — just shortly after the neo-conservative journal, ***The Weekly Standard***, published a broadside aimed at Chavez in its Aug. 8 issue, claiming that Chavez "is a threat to more than just his own people."

The article was devoted to the thesis that the Chavez government is a threat to the tiny but wealthy Jewish population in Venezuela—roughly 22,000 people in a nation of 22
million.

The ***Standard*** bemoaned the fact that Venezuelan state television broadcast a report speculating that Israel's intelligence service, Mossad, may have been linked to the assassination of a local official in Venezuela. As such, police officials conducted a raid on a Jewish school that was believed by the government to be housing weapons that may have been involved in the crime. This act of national defense, against a perceived threat from the clandestine services agency of a foreign power, Israel, was presented by the ***Standard*** as some sort of Adolf Hitler-style Gestapo action.

Asserting that "hostility to Jews has become one of the hallmarks of the Venezuelan government," the ***Standard*** cited a U.S. State Department "Report on Global Anti-Semitism" that purported to document, in the ***Standard's*** words, "how openly anti-Semitic the Venezuelan government now is."

Of particular concern to the pro-Israel journal is that one of Chavez's closest advisors was the late Norberto Ceresole, described as "an Argentinian writer infamous for his books denying the Holocaust and his conspiracy theories about Jewish plans to control the planet" and whose book hailing Chavez, in its opening chapter, forcefully raised questions about Zionist influence worldwide.

Chavez himself has backtracked in the face of Zionist criticism. In 2000, when he announced a trip to Iraq to visit Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, Chavez taunted neo-conservative media critics by saying, "Imagine what the Pharisees will say when they see me with Saddam Hussein."

Actually, complaints by Israel's supporters against Chavez go back to the beginning of his first years in office. In 2000, the Stephen Roth Institute on Anti-Semitism and Racism at the Tel Aviv University in Israel issued a report on Anti-Semitism Worldwide 1999/2000 which targeted Chavez declaring:

> Venezuela has undergone a dramatic political transformation since the 1998 general elections, which has had a negative impact on the Jewish community. The new administration's cool stance toward the community and toward Israel has encouraged anti-Semitism, evidenced particularly
> in the mainstream press . . .
>
> Some observers [point] to the president's close relations with Libya, Iraq and Iran, which would serve to explain his hostility toward Israel as well.

The Israeli report also raised the specter of Chavez's friendship with the aforementioned Ceresole — "the well-known Argentinian anti-Semite" — driving home the point that Chavez is likewise considered an enemy of Israel.

Meanwhile, although Americans who heard of Robertson's violent provocation against Chavez were told by the media that Chavez was a "leftist" and a "friend of Fidel Castro" — charges certain to inflame many Americans — the fact that the pro-Israel network had an axe to grind with Chavez was carefully kept under wraps, with the Israeli lobby's criticisms of Chavez confined to small-circulation journals, such as ***The Weekly Standard*****,** read almost exclusively by supporters of Israel, such as Robertson.

In order to manipulate the American public, the major media has helped the Bush administration by stoking up fears of Chavez being some sort of new "communist threat" when nothing could be further from the truth.

In truth, Chavez has modeled himself and his domestic revolution on the tradition of Simon Bolivar, who liberated the Andean colonial provinces from the Spanish imperial crown and who in traditional American history texts has been called "The George Washington of South America."

Although Chavez is a critic of rampant global super-capitalism, which he calls "the demon," Alma Guillermoprieto pointed out in the Oct. 6, 2005 edition of ***The New York Review of Books*** that "a great many businessmen have prospered under his rule, and he has made it clear he sees a significant role for the private sector and, most particularly, for foreign investment."

A journalist specializing in media critique, Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem***, ***The Judas Goats***, and ***Dirty Secrets***, all available from America First Books and First Amendment Books. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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